

The important point to be made here is that the Kanuri feel that the *har-*
*zum*³ or discipline-respect ingredients of the father-son relationship can be trans-
 ferred. This does not mean that they forget their own fathers who are their biolog-
 ical kin. However it does mean that they use the norms of the father-son relation-
 ship for self-advancement or for relating to other people as they would to their fa-
 ther, in return for those things that they obtain traditionally from a father. Kanuri
 were always coming to me and addressing me as their father, or asking for a small
 gift in the hope that they might repay me with some discipline and respect and
 begin initiating a *tada njima* role for themselves with me as their *abba njima*.
 However, there is more to initiating the role than simply asking me for a gift or
 doing a service. In order for it to work there must be *aman* or trust. A man must
 know when he brings a client into his household that he will try to behave like a
 son. Even then he waits patiently and watches to see how firm and fast the pro-
 fessed loyalty really is. Most Kanuri say that a year is not too long a period to wait
 while testing out the strength of such a relationship before actually giving the per-
 son (the *tada njima*) some real responsibilities from which both the household
 head and the client might gain.

This means of adding to a household can produce very extensive groupings
 under the proper conditions. If a man has a powerful political post, either in the
 traditional or modern post-colonial administration, his activities in trade, farming,
 tax collection, or adjudication means that he can use a large following of loyal and
 obedient clients. The transferability of the father-son relationship allows men to
 build up such organizations whenever they have the means to maintain them. Kanu-
 ri judge success in life not by wealth or power per se, but by the size of a man's
 following. And the best indication of this is the size of the household and those
 related households over which he has some control. Thus great households, the
 greatest of which is that of the Shehu of Bornu, form the upper class group of
 Kanuri society. Wealthy traders have many *tada njima* who, after their loyalty has
 been proven, are given goods and money to go out and trade for their superiors.
 Bornu society is such that powerful men, indeed any man wishing to raise his sta-
 tus, require loyal followers and clients who use the ingredients of the father-son
 relationship to define their interpersonal relations. Certainly many of the people a
 man may depend upon are members of his own descent group, but kinsmen differ
 from clients in a number of important respects. Kinsmen may profit not only by
 one another's success, but through inheritance they also gain by each other's death.
 Or if a particular prerogative, say access to political office of some kind, resides in
 one male line, then an office-holder's male relatives may profit from his dismissal
 since one of them may be considered as a replacement. Furthermore relationships
 based on descent cannot be broken completely—some mutual dependence always
 remains—even though a superior dislikes the services of his descent group member
 who is serving as his subordinate. Clientship is more rational in this respect since
 clients can in effect be "fired" for poor performance of their duties. Thus client-
 ship, represented by the *tada njima* relationship, is a flexible and useful tool in the
 building of Kanuri households and even larger social groupings.

Finally it is important to remember that all of these important relationships
 are basically those within a household. This is the stage upon which family life

³ The letter 3 is pronounced as the "oo" in "look" or "book."

to seniors, first in the household then in the society at large, that is the most important social learning of childhood. Kanuri society is hierarchical. Whether the person is in one compound or another, one social situation or another, there is always one common feature—rank and its determinants, power and authority. By living in several compounds, by seeing authority at work in the community, and by learning to generalize his response to authority, the young child learns to respond easily and gracefully to many combinations of rank and position. His counterpart in western society may be learning how to cope with the intricacies of modern urban technology, but he would certainly be no match for his Kanuri counterpart in the diplomacy necessary in dealing with superiors. 105
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Puberty

Puberty is not an age-grade in the same sense as childhood or adolescence. Yet it deserves some special attention because it is a marker that separates these two life periods and creates a means for very important transitions especially for young girls. Sometime between the age of twelve and fourteen most girls undergo their first marriage. Boys, on the other hand begin their adolescence. This is a more care-free time for them than the period of intense training for adulthood that a girl is suddenly confronted with as she moves from childhood into her teenage period and marriage. 881
[582]

However there are no absolutely sharp breaks even for a girl. A newly married young girl is not considered totally grown-up and sometimes she continues to wear her hair in the childhood style. If she divorces during this early period, usually the first three or four years after her first marriage, people often speak of her as *njim siri* or one who is only beginning to become a woman but who has not completed the change-over to full adulthood.¹ At first the young wife still sees many unmarried childhood friends who will soon be getting married themselves. They visit her when she is confined to the house for varying periods depending upon how secluded her husband wishes his wife to be. Only gradually over the period of the first year or so of marriage does the young girl begin to participate fully as a wife. From the first she cooks food regularly because it is her duty and her right, and as time goes on she is seen more and more in the company of the older, adult women of the compound and the neighborhood. If she is not in total seclusion, like most rural wives, then she can be seen going with the women to the well or the market, and to women's festivities in the village. 884
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Although rare it sometimes happens that a girl misses the opportunity to marry while still in her early teens. Leaving aside the very few girls who go on in school, such cases are rather tragic. The girl is either mentally deficient or a disturbed person, or one who people say has been having love affairs before marriage. In such cases she changes her hair style in her middle to late teens and takes on the role of a single divorced woman seeking a new husband and therefore open to courtship and sexual liaisons with men. 882
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[302]

In Magumeri one young girl about fifteen or sixteen who was well de-

¹ Literally *njim siri* means to have seen inside the hut, that is she has been alone with her husband but only seen or glimpsed at the activities of adulthood not really practiced; them in full. (192)

64 • THE LIFE CYCLE

882 developed physically had not yet married. There were many rumors and much gossip
883 to the effect that she was no longer a virgin and that men of the town slept with
581 her. Her father, it was said, would have a hard time arranging her first marriage.
• 156 The girl herself seemed to be suffering increasingly from her inability to see herself
in the role of a child awaiting marriage instead of that of a developing young ma-
tron—the role now common among her young age mates. Thus in order to take up
a normal position in society, girls are supposed to have their first marriages in and
around the time of puberty. Failure to do so indicates a deviant and degrading de-
velopment. This is the reason why almost all Bornu men say that girls who go on
883 in the educational system are "spoiled" and should never be allowed to stay in
882 school beyond the traditional age of marriage. The girls in school see the matter
871 differently; the situation remains today one of tension, with the majority against
578 education for girls, and the schools themselves looking for students and preaching
a somewhat different attitude toward a girl's adolescence than that held tradition-
ally by the people.

882 Another point should also be noted. Most girls have very little choice, if
883 any, in their first marriage arrangements. If they are very drastically opposed to the
584 union, their views are considered since parents are afraid they might behave badly
as young wives. However they are traditionally supposed to respect the wishes
of their parents and comply with their demands. Indeed many Kanuri, both men
and women, know very little about their first marriage arrangements at all since
these are almost entirely made by their parents or the head of the compound they
are living in at the time. It should also be realized that many Kanuri girls marry
for the first time with men sometimes as much as two, three, and even four times
their own age which enhances the traditional seniority of the husband as well as
taking any "romance" out of it for the girls.

881 Sometime around the end of childhood and into the beginning of the teen-
1304 age period young boys are circumcized. This event is fundamentally a ceremonial
occasion and is thus related only in a rough general way to the actual onset of pu-
berly for each boy. Generally speaking boys are cut in groups, although in rural
areas it is not uncommon to see a family performing the ceremony for just one boy
[591] in the household. On the other hand circumcision among high-ranking people such
as village heads, district heads, members of the royal family, or rich traders in the
city attracts many other families who try to have their own children cut at the same
time to participate in the large festivities. Usually the higher the rank of the lead-
ing families involved in a circumcision the greater the number of boys who are
likely to be cut at the same time.

881 The important thing is not the readiness of the boy. Rather it is the auspi-
571 ciousness of the occasion in terms of the family's relationship to the rest of the
community. Is there a large circumcision taking place this year? Are a large number
of friends and relatives asking when little Abba Gana is going to be circumcized?
Have the household members, especially the household head, attended a great many
marriage or naming ceremonies? Have other community members been given gifts
on these occasions? Is it not time to reap the benefit of all this participation by
having a ceremony of one's own to which many people will come and bring gifts
of food, clothing, and money for the family and the boy? These and similar ques-
tions are the determining factors in the timing of the circumcision ceremony, and

885 must ask his permission to do anything. To be seen speaking to another man is
581 grounds for divorce. On the other hand a divorced woman is free. She comes and
[586] goes as she pleases and speaks to whoever she pleases quite freely. Some women
quite frankly remark that they prefer this status to that of marriage while others
just as strongly remark that they would like to get a husband.

885 In summary, maturity is a time of achievement for men in which they be-
105 come full-fledged members of their community. They marry, try to raise families,
156 and become heads of successful and productive households. Women try to marry
562 successfully and hopefully to have children. However, as I have pointed out else-
182 where, tensions caused by the demands of subordination in their married role pro-
[578] duce strains and rebelliousness that very often leads to the break-up of marriage.^a
In the final analysis the culture is androcentric; there are many means by which
men can become successful—through their occupation, their associations with
neighbors, relatives, friends, and important men, and through membership and
[592] finally headship of a household. In spite of a turnover in wives associated with the
high amount of divorce, the household itself is a stable unit, although its personnel
is not. On the other hand, it is the rare Kanuri woman who can achieve a success-
ful adulthood. Many women are barren or have had children who have not sur-
vived. Very few women remain married to the same men all their lives and most
have had one or more extended periods of being divorced and looking for a hus-
band. By centering on men and emphasizing their needs and wishes, Kanuri culture
has produced a strain on women that is a fertile field for changes when moderniza-
tion produces the possibility of new goals for women and new means for achieving
them.

Old Age

886 Old age is signalled in both sexes by the whitening of body hair even
888 though other body characteristics may remain strong and healthy. For both old men
[826] and women this last period in life means that many of the obligations and respon-
sibilities of adult life are slowly relinquished, although men generally feel that they
belong to the adult roles much longer than women. As heads of households and
office holders in governmental positions, men wield powers in a number of spheres
and give these up slowly and reluctantly as old age drains away their energy and
efficiency. Ideally in Kanuri culture a man should reach the golden years of his life
in his old age. If all goes well he receives much respect; his work is carried on by
descendants, and his position as a household head may have grown to the point
where he is the senior authority among a group of households organized along the
lines of a patrilineal extended family with clients, sons, brothers, and their wives
and families looking to him for leadership. When he is very old and becoming
progressively infirm, he lets many of these duties pass to mature members of the
group. Even then they always consult him on decisions and pay heed to his wishes.

888 The reality in Kanuri society is often far from the ideal although the ideal is a
183 very widely agreed upon goal. To obtain this most desirable position in old age a
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^a See Ronald Cohen, "Marriage instability among the Kanuri of Northern Nigeria," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 63, 1231-1249.

1: Cohen

MS14 Kanuri MS14

• 156

/For rôles of single adult males in client-patron relationships (tada njima), see category 116,
pp. 48-52./

592 In addition to the formal relationships between master and slave, and between adopted son and chibuna, described above, there are informal ways through which an individual may become attached to a household. Every adult must be attached to some household. Since the minimal household is represented by a man 592 and his wife, a divorced couple marks the end of their household. Each of them, man and woman, must now attach himself to another household. The primary reason for this is economic-- and it makes itself felt immediately in the problem of food.

[462] A man without a wife has no one to cook for him. Since no Kanuri man would ever cook for himself (cooking and preparation of food are tasks confined to women), he must attach himself to the household of a friend, neighbor, or close relative, and regularly take his meals there. However, it is somewhat [56] shameful to continue on in this position, and a man who had recently divorced his wife tends to take another wife before long, thereby re-establishing his own household. The woman, after a divorce, goes back to her luwali, and becomes a zogor who lives in his household until she remarries. She, too, becomes a temporary member of her luwali's household and takes her meals with the women of that household. The luwali has the responsibility of offering a roof to his ward after her divorce, and it is not uncommon to find a zogor living for a time as a part of a large household. Men will regularly come to court her, and in time she will remarry and leave her luwali's household.

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There is still another way to become part of a large house-

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5. Slaves--both male and female; chirs and their children.
6. Zogors and bachelors, as temporary members.
7. Tata njima--non-kin.
8. Malams of the Koran--taken in, and provided with a house and food, as an act of charity.

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The term yal is used for members of the household who are not close kinsmen of the household head. This group, some of whom are necessarily present while others are occasionally found, some permanent and others temporary, some kinsmen and others not, forms the central social unit in Kanuri society. Its size and its composition reflects the status of the household head in the larger society, in terms of both the old and traditional system of social stratification, and in terms of present-day realities and opportunities. The solidarity of the household as a unit also reflects the ability of the household head to satisfy the expectations of the various members of his household, and consequently to live up to his own view of himself and his status in Kanuri society. In order to satisfy his wives, his slaves, his tata njima, and to induce people to name sons after him, he must be in a position, economically and politically, which will permit him to meet expectations. They, in turn will labor for him, and by their labors, as well as by their very presence as part of his household, the members of his household will help the household head to validate his status in the society.

• [156]

Furthermore the status of the slave was never that

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of a degraded individual, since titled slaves were themselves part of the nobility. In fact, a slave who is part of an important man's household may refer to "talaka" in a derogatory manner, indicating his own superior position to that of the impoverished peasant farmer.

3. Talaka.

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The talaka in the towns and villages formed the bulk of the population in the days of the empire just as they do today. In former times they were the talaka of a particular chima; today they are the talaka of a particular District Head.

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But the class of talaka is far from homogeneous. The primary distinction to be made is between rural and urban talaka. Rural talaka do tend to be a rather homogeneous group. Urban talaka may fall into a variety of types, which differ in

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their relative wealth and prestige. In the days of the empire there were wealthy talaka who lived in the cities. Trade had always been important in Bornu, and a class of important traders formed a segment of the urban talaka population. Similarly, the various specialists and artisans who lived in the towns and cities formed distinct groups within the talaka population, just as other types of specialists were and still are viewed as low-status groups.

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Since they are all talaka, none wield political power, and so one might say that there were no differences between the various types of talaka with respect to power. However, there

[GEIDAM]

651 increase of 6,000 cows. The tax figures for Geldam District
634 in 1956 are as follows:
[652]

village jangali - 30,000 cows	
nomad jangali - 39,000 cows	taxes collected = £ 17,500
road and market jangali	3,000
hara ji	<u>41,000</u>
total taxes	£ 61,500

Geldam is a large, populous district and the sums involved in
[433] tax collection are correspondingly large. Because Geldam has
a large farming population, it has less bush area to accommodate
nomadic Fulani and the number of cows on which nomadic jangali
651 is collected is smaller than in Magumeri District. Yerima
634 Mustapha's approach to jangali collection is to reconcile two
563 seemingly conflicting goals. On the one hand he attempts to
attract Fulani Ardos into his district; on the other hand he
attempts to collect jangali for every single cow within the
district. Digma, the Ajla of Magumeri District, doesn't try
to attract Fulani into his district, nor can he collect jangali
for all the cows already there, though he tours a great deal
and covers much of the area himself, which Yerima does not do.

651 The contrast presented by the two Ajlas, Yerima and Dig-
634 ma, is enlightening. From the point of view of the British,
663 Yerima does an excellent job in administering his district, and
156 [B-42] in particular in collecting taxes. The amount which Yerima
brings in to the NA treasure is steadily increasing, and there
is no reason for investigating his methods as there are no com-
plaints. Yerima organizes his kabuna, who do the actual work
of collecting taxes. Yerima himself does not perform the physi-

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651 cal labor involved. Digma, on the other hand, has moved into
634 the district which Yerima left, so that the contrast between
663 the two is particularly marked. Taxes have constantly been
156 declining in his district, and he is continually suspected of
embezzling tax money--otherwise how else can one explain the
meager sums brought in from such a prosperous district? The
threat of investigation and dismissal hovers over Digma, a
[208] nervous and suspicious man to begin with. He is not liked in
his district, is not a generous man, and has few kabuna under
him. Consequently he is driven to go out and to collect the
taxes himself, but the job is far more than one man could ever
accomplish and he has only increased worries to show for his
efforts. Every failure of Digma's recalls the memory of Yerima,
who was respected and liked, who was generous, and who per-
634 formed so well as Ajia. Yerima's success in this as in so
663 many things derives from his keen insight into the traditional
554 social structure and his ability to adapt and use traditional
156 means to achieve his ends. The manner in which he maintains a
large corps of kabuna, many of them slaves, and uses their
services to his advantage while at the same time fulfilling all
the obligations of a great aristocrat, are an illustration of
this. Digma on the other hand is unable to act the part of a
traditional aristocrat, and constantly lives in fear of those
above him.

651 One way of handling the problem of inducing Fulani Ardos
634 to come into a district while at the same time taxing their
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*177 veal areas in which they are unacculturated; the most unacculturated groups similarly reveal areas of behavior in which they are acculturated. That these differences in degree of acculturation are determined by the relation of a given group or category to that area of behavior, as is stated in the second sentence of hypothesis 2, is readily apparent from the data. Explanations of these differences in the above discussion have repeatedly sought to relate them to the roles of the group concerned. If these explanations have been convincing, then hypothesis 2 may be said to have been upheld.

It is somewhat more difficult to discuss the implications of the data which have been presented above for hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 states that groups and categories which have become acculturated in certain areas will show strong tendencies to reaffirm strict behavioral norms in other areas. The position of a group within the existing social structure plays an important part not only in determining the areas in which acculturation is likely to occur but also in determining those behavioral areas in which acculturation would not be expected to occur--i.e., those areas in which the group reaffirms traditional behavioral norms.

This may be illustrated by selecting three of the groups whose profiles have been presented in the previous chapter for comparison. The three groups are the following:

- a) NA Malams - acculturated and stable.
- b) Canteen Operators - intermediary in acculturation and unstable.
- c) Craftsmen - unacculturated and stable.

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156 The NA Malams are the most acculturated group of the eight which have been described. How would one account for the fact that

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*177 they are such a stable group then? The role of the NA Malam
634 is clearly defined. His Western education is generally ac-
• 156 knowledged as a useful thing and he is accorded prestige by
554 being called "Malam". The goals of the NA Malams are tradi-
tional Kanuri goals. This is brought home most strikingly in
their choice of occupations (Table XXXIII) where four of the
six NA Malams chose "Lowan." Their education, their knowledge
of the English language, their general high degree of accul-
turation have not hindered them from attaining positions of
political power, a very traditional goal in Kanuri society.
On the contrary, these things have become assets. The accul-
tured individual is at an advantage over the unacculturated
individual in rapidly rising within the political system. This
state of things will remain at its present level only so long
as: (a) the number of NA Malams does not rapidly increase so
that many individuals are competing for a limited number of
political positions, which would mean that a group of dis-
gruntled and disappointed individuals would be created, and,
(b) their degree of acculturation does not reach the point
where their goals, too, will change. At present, in the com-
munity of Geldam, neither of the latter conditions have arisen.
It can also be seen from their acculturation profile that the
NA Malams adhere to important Kanuri values in other areas.
They do not smoke or drink beer; they fast and wear many charms;
they are not reluctant to give gifts of charity; and they would
tend to avoid marrying an educated woman or let her work. All

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[GEIDAM]

*177 of these indicate that the NA Malams have not rejected important Kanuri values in the course of their acculturation. Though
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• 156 they are a very acculturated group, they are in no danger of drifting away from Kanuri culture and becoming deviants. Consequently they are a stable group, with clearly defined roles and mutually understood expectations and obligations. Other Kanuri can understand the NA Malam, and the NA Malam himself realizes the "self" that he wishes to convey without having to affirm his Kanuri identity through exaggerated behavior.

*177 The Craftsmen represent the opposite extreme of an uncultured and stable group. Their primary role requires
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[554] highly skilled and specialized behavior of them and their status is respected in the community. Although their activities are primarily within the economic area, the range of individuals with whom they interact is narrow and they have little or no direct contact with agents of Western society. Their knowledge of languages and of writing is slight. They have few Western goods, nor do they know much about these items. They are not very strict about fasting and drinking beer, but in other areas they adhere strongly to Kanuri values, such as taking disputes for arbitration and giving gifts of charity. They show a slight inclination to favor European doctors, and they favor Western occupations though their aspirations for their sons are strongly traditional. They are not very conservative about education generally. The overall picture of the Craftsmen is of a group that is obviously not very acculturated, but their responses,

[GEIDAM]

177 accepting attitude towards Western material goods.

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Having accepted these new behavioral alternatives and having achieved great success in their new activities, the status of the group of canteen operators began to change. Their roles were new and strange to them; they were unclear of their obligations in the changing situation. Though they now had important statuses in the community, there was no title to accompany these statuses. A pious Moslem who becomes wealthy is able to fulfill his obligation to carry out the pilgrimage to Mecca, and this the Canteen Operators did at the first opportunity. Five of the six members of that group in the present study became Alhajis, a title by which the pilgrim is henceforth addressed. This is a means to acquire prestige in the community, but it also serves another purpose --it demonstrates that the individual concerned is a pillar of faith in the community and may be expected to uphold traditional ways.

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The "self" which the Canteen Operators seek to communicate to others is of an individual who is conservative, an upholder of tradition. This is in contrast to their acceptance of new sorts of behavior and to the recent changes to which they have been party within the social structure. Indeed, it is because of these things that the Canteen Operators present such a conservative "self" and in so doing they exhibit behavior which is predicted in hypothesis 3. In the case of the Canteen Operators the sanctions involved would be the rejection

[GEIDAM]

#177 by others of the right of the Canteen Operators to occupy im-
441 portant positions in the community. This would be brought
• 156 about by a denial of power and prestige on the part of other
[68] community members. In order to prevent this from happening,
the Canteen Operators assert their identity as part of the
Kanuri community by stressing traditional Kanuri values. It
is their considerable degree of acculturation in certain be-
havioral areas, taken with their extreme conservatism, fre-
quently in the same area of behavior, which leads to the char-
acterization of the group as an unstable group.

Their inconsistencies, as exhibited in Table XLII, occur
in almost every area of behavior. They would wear European
shoes, but decidedly would not wear European trousers, thus
indicating their extreme sensitivity to the difference between
these two items of clothing. They fast at Tsuro Mbulo, though
they rarely wear charms. They would visit a European doctor
and prefer European medicine, though they prefer the Kanuri
method of treatment for five of the six diseases. They would
take their disputes to court and tend to place conditions on
the giving of charitable gifts, and both of these have been dis-
cussed in terms of the ambiguity of expectations in their roles.
They would send their son to school though they state a pref-
erence for the Koranic Malam over the Western school. They
would marry a Hausa woman, though not a woman of any of the
other tribes. Their most pronounced inconsistency is in the
final two items of their profile. They are strongly in favor

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177 of marrying an educated woman, but extremely conservative about
178 permitting her to work as a school-teacher. In fact, their
• 156 response to this question seems to be exaggerated in its ad-
herence to upper class traditional Kanuri norms.

121 The behavior of the group of Canteen Operators, compared
177 to that of the NA Malams and the Craftsmen, is entirely consist-
441 ent with the predictions made in hypothesis 3. They have be-
156 come acculturated in certain behavioral areas as a result of
the interactions brought about by their roles in trade. Their
new status in the community has resulted in further accultura-
tion in still other areas (attitudes towards arbitration of
disputes, attitudes towards generosity and charity). But their
need to reaffirm their Kanuri identity and to validate their
new positions in Kanuri society has led them to underline their
affirmation of traditional Kanuri values, frequently by assum-
ing exaggerated poses. Their behavior lends support to the
third hypothesis advanced earlier.

121 The theoretical significance of the present study is in
the view of acculturation which has been put forth. Heretofore,
acculturation studies have relied heavily on two types of ap-
proach: (1) the relationship between acculturation and person-
ality variables (as exemplified by the writings of Hallowell,
Wallace, Caudill, Vogt and Mead), and (2) the attempt to delin-
eate which areas of culture change most rapidly as a result
of contact and which areas of culture remain resistant to change.

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[565] ship developing in the husband-wife relationship depending upon
[586] the stability of the union. Such friendships are aided and abetted
by cousin marriage as well as by upper class position where the
divorce rate does not seem to be as high.

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Finally, an examination of the nature of friendship in
general excluding the grandparent-grandchild, and mother-child rela-
tions reveals some unique features which arise from its setting in
the total social organization. The question can be raised as to why
it is that friendship is not formalized or structured to the same
extent as the other behaviours associated with the kinship system.
Certainly, an immediate answer lies in the universal nature of this
kind of interpersonal relationship, i.e., its affectivity and expres-
sive content, and the concomitant emotional satisfactions which
people obtain from such associations. These tend to create a large
area for personality characteristics to determine exactly who among
the available persons, for example age-mates in the kindred, ego
will move toward in expanding and contracting his friendships. As
in our society, social factors such as socio-economic status, occu-
pation, residence patterns, ethnic background, and norms of upward
mobility all enter into such choices as well. But there is more to
Kanuri friendship relations than a mere addition or interaction of
these idiosyncratic features of personality attraction and repulsion
on the one hand and sociological variables on the other.

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Informants were forever telling the anthropologist
that someone he mentioned was a friend of theirs, although no affec-
tive or emotional or for that matter any very real social relation-
ship existed between them. They meant, of course, that they liked

583 A man who started using his wife's dowry without
593 her knowledge and con-
[586] sent would have a fine argument on his hands immediately and most prob-
[685] ably a divorce proceeding. One mother turned her young adolescent son
over to a judge for a whipping because he took one of the enamel plates

156 from her dowry to sell for cash. A woman's concept of her own personal
583 worth is tied closely to her dowry. During her youth, it is the material
expression of her relationship to her own family background. Later, as
her independence grows and she adds to the dowry, she looks on it more
as her personal property, her savings, which give her a measure of value
[685] in her immediate society. She can say of herself that she has 250 enamel
dishes, while her younger co-wife has only 125.

581 The Kanuri recognize different varieties of marriage and
have separate terms for each of them. Whether these are in fact dif-
ferent forms is a question of interpretation which will be discussed
later.

The first and most important distinction about a marriage
concerns the virgin status of the woman. This consequently divides all
marriages into two broad categories depending upon whether or not the
female has ever been married before. If she has, the marriage is descri-
bed as kasu gwojin (he takes a woman). Conversely, if the female is a
virgin, the union is termed a fero gwojin (he takes a girl or virgin).
All informants agreed that union with a virgin is the most highly valued
form of marriage in their society. They explained this by pointing to
the chaste state of the girl. She is not used, they say, and this is
[832] good. However it should be noted that informants were also agreed that
virgin girls were not sexually exciting or attractive. One informant,
a man of about forty years of age was observed in almost constant prayer
for a whole week preparing for his first night of virgin marriage which
very nearly ended in failure, only succeeding on the second attempt with
the aid of magical devices.

593 This is often accompanied by a
595 more rapid turnover in other wives who tend to resent the close re-
586 lationship of the longer term wife with the common husband.

4. Status of Wife's Family

593 Among marriages where the woman or girl has come from a
565 higher ranking family than the man's, the woman has a potential lever
which she may use to ameliorate male dominance. She realizes that her
husband's connection to her family is one of the foundations of his
social status and ease of divorce makes her connecting function some-
[602] what tenuous. On the other hand, her family may be interested in main-
taining their relationship with her husband, and thus attempt to limit
her behaviour to a position more in line with cultural ideal of sub-
missiveness, in order to keep her husband satisfied, as well as honour-
ing their own positions as givers of not just wives but of "good" wives.

5. Personality Factors

593 Needless to say, the particular personality make-up of the
• 156 husband and wife helps determine whether or not the traditional pat-
tern of male dominance is possible. Fearful, timid, submissive men do
not make strong, dominating husbands, while independent, strong-willed
women do not easily become subservient, humble and docile wives. The
cultural pattern may be reacted to in different ways. It is anxiety
provoking to those men who fail, or are afraid of being unable to dom-
inate, while it may serve as an outlet for aggression and hostility on
the part of disappointed men who have failed elsewhere in their lives.

6. Socio-Economic Status of the Husband

593 As was noted above, a man needs a wife to cook his food and
557 return hospitality, as well as to provide food for men who have no
wives, which helps create obligatory relationships for the male. The

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831 but who has been circumcised, more often referring to the sexually active). In discussing this point further, informants remarked that such persons were not true sairo but they acted like them. The joking implied in this designation is not nearly as humorous to the hearers, when applied to a divorced man with no present wife (who really has many status similarities to an older adolescent) as when it is applied to a married man who is continually seeking extra-marital sexual relations. This joking reference to the married man being a sairo points up the ideal of mildly chaste behaviour proper to the rashidi status.

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885 Many young married men who are subordinate to elder relatives, or political and/or economic superiors in large household organisations, or who are still apprentices, refuse to be labelled as rashidi when asked, even though they are married. They plead that they are still tada gana (small boys). They feel that their subservient position and lack of achievement in the areas of behaviour mentioned above, that are considered to be characteristic of rashidi status, puts them in the position of small boys who still have to grow up, or who are under their father's control. For subservient persons whose occupation requires that they remain in close subordinate relationship to a superior for most of their lives, the criteria of marriage, children, age, own compound, and farm plots, slowly begin to change the person's concept of himself and he comes to accept a label of rashidi if it is put to him as a question. However, he understands the limits of its application in his particular case. For example, one informant of about forty-five, whose father had been a servant of the District Head's father and who was himself a life-long servant of the District Head, accepted a definition of himself as a rashidi (mature man), who

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885 would, he said laughingly, soon be a chiari (an old man). He explained that he had a married daughter, a farm, a compound, and a wife, who he proudly asserted had stayed with him for eight years, and for all these reasons he was a rashidi. But when asked in the same context if he would ever go to live somewhere independently of his superior's headquarters, without instructions he quickly replied, "atā nrai wuma tādā gana" (in that sense I am a small boy). In other words, in that particular area of behaviour generally associated with rashidi status I am not a participant as one who is a grown man, rather I am like a young son who must obey his father. This is not in any way shameful for the informant, since his status in the subservient relationship to the District Head is accepted by the culture.

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562 Rashidi is then more than just a description of physiological age. In general people consider that when a man has been married he should be defined as having reached adult status. But when the term is applied to an adult male who had been married, it is found that a set of achievements is used as a criterion for judging a person's age grade status. These achievements are valued attributes of adult male life as defined by the culture which are available in varying degrees to all male members of the society.

A woman who has had a child can be referred to as kuko, which means that she has achieved the important goal of motherhood and has added a new member to her husband's agnatic group as well as to her own. Middle aged women (about thirty to forty) can be referred to as gudum to distinguish them from younger or older women, whether or not they have borne children. In actual practice these terms were not observed to be in common use, the woman's status and age being

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was considered inappropriate as a servant and household member to a powerful newcomer to the community,

Matri-kin do not give a man much ascribed birth status one way or another. However, the matri-kin often aid the individual and if they are a powerful high status group in the society, he may derive some benefits from this relationship. But these rewards must be realized before this ascribed status is worth anything to ego in the eyes of others.

The importance of birth status was made plain during the gathering of genealogical data. A well-known "arriviste" in Magumeri, who served as the District Head's right hand man and principal link with the urban community, gave a completely trumped-up genealogy which included, patrilineally many antecedents who had been the horsed servants (ko'una) of well known nobles of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Bornu. Only later, when crosschecking some of the material, was it discovered that this informant was the son of a man who used to tend camels for their owners in the Maiduguri market and that he, himself, had started life as a gatherer and seller of bush grass for horse fodder. His faked genealogy reveals his sensitivity to his low status background and his desire to give a newcomer the impression of continuity regarding his origins. His own rank at the time of the interview was that of horsed servant to the District Head of Magumeri, so that the faked genealogy indicated his desire to create for himself a family background of similar status to his present one.

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156 Along with other explanations (see below pp.225 -228 , arsiri)

birth ascription is also used to describe the reasons for success or failure at any given role, especially among the high ranks of society where improper behaviour can be attributed to the person's rise from a

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lower level. A high born, successful chief explained the improper, disreputable behaviour of another chief by claiming that this sort of thing was not surprising behaviour from the son of a slave. At the peasant level, birth status can count as well in raising or lowering an individual in the eyes of his fellows. A man is given higher status because his father is rich or is a powerful Keranic mallam, while it may be whispered of another that his mother was a pagan, or his father was a blacksmith, thus lowering his status in the eyes of others.

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As in most complex stratified societies, birth in Bornu into any one level determines to a large measure what range up or down of status positions an individual is likely to achieve in his lifetime. (1)

There is a much higher chance that high status positions are occupied by the sons of high status persons rather than the sons of peasants.

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Western education and the plethora of jobs opening up is latterly creating a more widely mobile society, but it was British policy at the beginning of the colonial period to educate the sons of chiefs. The advantages of this policy were soon perceived by the leaders of the society.

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Consequently, a large proportion of the young western educated group are sons of the traditional political leaders. There is no conflict over this tendency from the rural population, who still do not value western education very highly, although rumblings of resentment are heard in

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the large urban centre. At the peasant level many of the craft workers in Magumeri, the potters, dyers, blacksmiths, calabash makers and the other craftsmen, are from kin groups that have engaged in these industries "duk" (right back through time), for as long as any of them can remember. However, except for the potters (females) and blacksmiths,

(1) cf. Lipsett, S.M. and Bendix, R., Social Mobility and Occupational Career, American Journal of Sociology Vol. LVII (March 1952) pp. 494-504.

434 man of means. That is to say it is not correct to extrapolate the proportions of Kanuri budgets into the future, unless incomes and social values remain constant.

454 Saving takes place in Bornu on a short term basis, and attempts to save after harvest time for a marriage, or for a few weeks in order to buy a new robe, are quite common. However systematic and morally sanctioned long term savings are impossible for the majority of the population.

● 156 The traditional reason for savings in the Western world is
571 the highly responsible nature of each man for his own subsistence. The Kanuri on the other hand obtains much of his personal security from his social relationships, his kinship ties, and the other groups of which he is a member. Thus a man may always take a meal at a relative's, friend's or superior's house. It is because of the traditional interpretation placed upon security, that increased income is at present utilized to create stronger and more widely ranging sets of barzumi relationships with kin and non-kin subordinates.

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511 Nevertheless, increased cash incomes in the last twenty years, have been changing and expanding Kanuri consumption patterns. Today, city people like to ride and own bicycles. Wrist watches, aided by the post-war manufacture of cheap Swiss makes, are widely owned and demand is increasing. The upper class and urbanites in general give canned fruits and candies to one another as gifts; refrigerators and electric fans are coming into more common use among the urban class, as are vacuum flasks, tea, coffee, industrially produced beverages, and a host of other "modern" goods. Thus Kanuri tastes are widening, and foreign travel, as well as modern means of mass communications, are informing an ever growing section of the population about the comparative poverty of

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But these norms are in turn dependent upon other phenomenon in the society. Child training practices and the conditions under which they occur teach recruits to the society how to operate in the adult world. The political and economic structure ensure that proper

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barzum relations are rewarded. Changes in these phenomenon will produce changes in the overall structure of society, and we have seen cer-

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tain changes already occurring. Thus western education is becoming more important as a means of upward mobility into the highly ranked civil

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service and this change in recruitment practices will continue. This is bound to produce personal conflicts for those who are subjected to the conflicting goals and standards of the two systems of socialization, which could manifest itself in a western trained group of reformers setting up pressure for change in the society.

Urbanization which has been increasing in the past twenty years will continue to do so in the near future. Norms of living are expanding to include more goods from the outside world. This is being constantly stimulated by improved channels of communication and transportation. The future of the present structure of Kanuri society is clearly dependent upon whether or not its political and economic organization can be maintained in the face of these ongoing changes as they accumulate through time.

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Another way to think about the stability of Kanuri society is to consider the possibility of class conflict. If such conflict is possible, then a different kind of structure can emerge relative to the present. At the moment it is hierarchical segments which are often in opposition to one another. Class conflict sets up solidary or cohesive tendencies among horizontal strata of society and results in the opposition of segments containing relatively equal ranks.

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Peasants often complained of excess taxation, or bad judicial decisions, or the harshness of some upper class person. Again most peasants when asked about Nigerian independence, thought of the idea as horrendous, for with the British gone they believe that they would be oppressed as of old by the upper class. Does this constitute a "class conflict?" If by "class conflict" is meant an opposition of interests, goals, loyalties of different ranks in society, then there is no "class struggle" in Bornu. The study has shown that there is no total reliance or identification of any whole strata or class horizon-

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tally across the society. A man feels friendly and culturally comfortable with his social equals. He also feels socially and psychologically comfortable with his followers, subordinates, kinsmen (if not competitors), close friends, and they with him. A peasant-commoner is not one among the masses of his social equals. He is someone's peasant, i.e. he is ranked in a system of superior/subordinate relationships that link him to a great complex feudal organization which is the State.

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This means, to use Gluckman's phrase, that the society is "crosslinked" ⁽¹⁾ by class and status on the one hand which bring together people of similar goals, rank, class, and wealth; and on the other hand, by feudal chains of superior/subordinate relations that link up individuals into a vertical system of loyalties so that a man's ties are both with his class and with his superiors. It is very difficult to imagine a "class conflict" while this kind of social organization is operating.

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However, the analysis allows us to see the conditions of change of the system. If the stability of the social organization depends, as this argument suggests, to a large extent on the cross-linkage of social relationships, then if these cross-links were to end or weaken, serious conflicts might result either horizontally or vertically depending upon

(1) See Gluckman, Max, Custom and Conflict in Africa, Oxford: Blackwell, 1955.